

not able (?) to attend public worship? Now possibly they were suddenly seized with one of these hitches—you know they come quite suddenly at times. Perhaps some one will be able to name a specific for this very unpleasant condition.

Glad to see that so many are getting interested in Ashland College. I have been doing what I can to get students. Not much show to get any from our own city, but I have been sending the word out over the country among my friends and acquaintances, hoping thereby to do some good. Let us all put our shoulder to the wheel and push together and the success which it so richly deserves will most assuredly follow.

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#### John Eliot, the Apostle to the Indians

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Special attention has been called to the life and work of the Apostle Eliot, by the observance last October of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of his first preaching to the Indians. Some new facts have been brought to light by recent investigations. It is possible to form a more intelligent idea of his missions, and of their results, than it was a few years ago.

He was one of the first generation of the Puritan ministers in New England. Born in Widford, a small parish twenty-five miles north from London, in 1604; the third child in a Nonconformist family of seven, brought up in Nasing, Essex County, from which so many of the Colonists of Massachusetts came; educated at Jesus College, Cambridge, where he received the degree of A. B., in 1623; employed as a teacher in the Grammar school at Little Baddow, under Thomas Hooker,—he was abundantly prepared for his work in New England. He sailed from England in the "ninth month," 1631, in the ship *Lyon*, and was landed in Boston, November 3rd of that year. He was at once employed to preach in the First Church in Boston, in the absence of their pastor, Mr. Wilson, in England. He was married the next year to that "beautiful Puritan maiden," Hannah Mumfoed, and was settled as pastor in Roxbury, November 5, 1632. His ministry, of almost sixty years, in that church, was much like that of the other Puritan pastors of the Colony. He was a very able and a well-read man, a careful student of the Bible and of the theology of the Reformers. He was an earnest and faithful preacher. He had a special interest in young people. His conversation was "sprinkled with wit." "His manner," we are told, "was commonly gentle and winning, but when sin was to be rebuked, his voice swelled into solemn and powerful energy. On such occasions there were as many thunderbolts as words."

Why was it that this earnest pastor of the church in Roxbury became the missionary to the Indians? Because the Pilgrims and the Puritans had crossed the sea as missionary colonies. Governor Bradford says that one reason for coming to New England was

the "great hope and inward zeal of laying some foundation for propagating the kingdom of Christ in the remote ends of the earth." The Massachusetts charter states that the principal end of the plantation was to "winn and incite the natives of the country to the knowledge of the true God and the Savior of mankind." The seal of the colony had the figure of an Indian, with the words, "Come over and help us."

In the earlier years they were not able to carry out their missionary plans in any systematic way. The struggle for a bare subsistence absorbed their energies. But they cherished friendly relations with the Indians who came every day into their settlements. They were an imitative race, and susceptible to acts of kindness from their Christian neighbors. Some of them in the early years gained a knowledge of the Christian religion. A few became members of the churches. As early as 1632 Roger Williams began to study their language with a view to preaching to them. In 1636 the Plymouth Colony provided by law for the regular preaching of the gospel among the Indians. Eight years later the younger colony of Massachusetts Bay requested the ministers to report what means could be used for the more systematic instruction of the Indians; and in 1646 the General Court directed the ministers to select each year two of their number to preach to the Indians. This was a signal for definite and systematic work. The idea of missions was in the air. The ministers were studying the language of their dusky neighbors, and the people were praying for their conversion. It is not surprising that a number of the Puritan ministers, at about the same time, began to preach to them.

John Eliot was among the first of these missionaries, and he was in some respects the most eminent. He says: "God first put into my heart a compassion over their poor souls, and a desire to teach them to know Jesus Christ, and to bring them into His Kingdom. Then presently I found out a pregnant-witted young man, a servant in an English family, who pretty well understood our language, and well understood his own. Him I made my interpreter."

Mr. Eliot's first effort to preach to the Indians was not successful. They gave "no heed to his word, but were weary, and despised what he said." The next effort was at Nonantum (now Newton,) October 28, 1648. It was only four or five miles from his own house. He went in company with three of his friends. The Indians had come together, in the great wigwam of Waban, to meet him, and to hear his message. He preached to them for an hour and a quarter from the vision of the dry bones in the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel. But he knew better than to follow his text. He began with the ten commandments, explaining the meaning of each one, and showing to the Indians in what ways they were every day breaking the law of God. He told them that God was angry with them every day for their sins. Then he told them of the Saviour whom God had sent

to save lost Indians; and that if they would put away their sins, and ask God to forgive them, his anger would turn away, and he would love them as his dear children.

This was the beginning. He went again by invitation two weeks later. The Indians at Neponset asked him to preach to them, and for some months he went once a week to Nonantum, and once a week to Neponset. He catechised the children. He gave the Indians opportunity to ask questions, and the most useful part of these services were their inquiries, and the replies of the missionary. He was invited to preach in a number of other Indian villages in Eastern Massachusetts, and he went as frequently as he was able, to tell the "old, old story."

All the accounts that have come down to us indicate that there was a genuine religious work among the Indians at that time. They left their old religion and worship, and began to pray, not only by themselves, but in their families, and to return thanks at meals. They taught their children, as far as they were able, and asked for teachers and for schools. They began to keep the Lord's day, and to meet by themselves, when Mr. Eliot could not be present, to pray, and to speak of the things they had learned. Waban, the most intelligent of them, took the lead in teaching his people, and in the devotional services.

A few months later, the Cambridge Synod met for its second session, and Mr. Eliot was permitted to assemble the praying Indians from the neighboring villages, and to preach to them in their own language in the presence of the Synod. He catechised the children, and the puritan ministers were delighted not only by the attention of the people to the word, but especially by "the readiness of divers poor naked children to answer openly the chief questions that had been taught them." From that time, this work had a large place in the sympathies and the prayers of good people, not only in New England, but in Great Britain, where narratives of these events were published and read by great numbers of the people.

It was a cardinal principle with Mr. Eliot that civilization must go with religion. The savage must form habits of industry before he could have strength of character to live an honest and virtuous life. He thought it necessary to separate the praying Indians from their tribe and gather them into villages by themselves, where they would learn the ways of the English, and be under English laws. He established the first Indian Community at Nonantum, where the General Court "purchased land for the Indians to make a Towne." He furnished them with tools such as the English used, and promised to pay sixpence a rod for all the stone wall they would build. In the course of two or three years it was found that this reservation was too small, as the number of praying Indians was increasing rapidly. It was also too near the English settlements. In 1650 he secured a larger grant of land at Natick, on Charles River, eighteen miles